The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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PEOPLES ARE GOVERNED BY THEIR CHARACTER. —Le Bon.

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PRIVATE OLD-AGE PENSION SYSTEM IS UNSOUND

In a survey of employers' old-age pension systems, issued by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the investigator sustains organized labor's charge that these pensions are maintained for anti-union purposes.

Labor's leading opposition is twofold: First, it is intended to tie workers to their jobs and make them submit to poor conditions, and second, it is used to stop strikes.

As to the first objection, the investigator says: "These are the very reasons why the scheme is favored by employers." Labor's second objection is likewise concurred in. The investigator says: "The wording of many of the plans confirms the charge."

It is also stated that out of 200 pension plans investigated, the company bears the whole cost, except in 13 instances.

In a recent issue the United States Review and Industrial World declared that private pension systems will eventually collapse and that scandals and a "mass of unpleasant" notoriety will inevitably follow. This publication says:

"Five hundred industrial institutions, among them many of the istrongest in the country, are piling up obligations which will, within a few years, require very large expenditures and for which no provision is now being made.

"Of more than 300 establishments recently questioned, less than 20 claim to be operating on an actuarial basis, and only seven were found to have set apart any funds with which to meet these constantly increasing obligations and only three of the seven are known to have established their funds in accordance with actuarial data and practices."

These indictments should impress workers who place their trust in employers who deny them the right to join a trade union, and who assume a paternal attitude over them.

The private pension system is young, but when these workers reach old age, the crash will come.

It is idle to expect relief through courts, as was shown in the case of 300 old employes of the Morris Packing company, when that concern was recently taken over by one of its Chicago rivals.

These workers had contributed to the Morris plan. They sued to be continued as pensioners, and set up the claim that they are too old to earn their living, and that they had foregone opportunities to benefit themselves. They believed the company when they were told it was not necessary to join a trade union.

The court refused to consider these promises and understandings, but ordered that the small amount they contributed be returned to them.

By this method the Morris concern tricked them to accept low wages and then sold out to a rival, while the duped workers were thrown on the streets.

Stock-selling ventures and company "unions" are identical to private old-age pensions. None of these schemes are operative in union plants.

Their purpose is evident. They have replaced the cruder methods of anti-unionists.

NORRIS DECLINES TO ASSIST MUSCLE SHOALS GRABBERS

Washington, March 20.—Senator Norris refused to serve as a member of the congressional commission that will lease Muscle Shoals for 50 years. The commission must report to congress on or before April 26. Senator Norris led the opposition to private leasing, which he declared was a crime against the people.

In the house, the joint resolution was declared by Congressman LaGuardia to be "the last step in a carefully prepared program."

"There is not a man in the whole world, there is not a commission, that can study a proposition of this magnitude and understand it before April 26, the time limit of the resolution," he said. "No bona fide offer could originate and be made within that time. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the lease, some where, by some one, somehow, is already written.

"Any offer made to the government for this property will be for the benefit of the corporation and not for the benefit of the government or the people. It is humanely impossible to obtain terms from any corporation that will safeguard the interests of the government, that will produce cheap fertilizer and that will make profits for the company. The three simply do not go together."

The New York congressman predicted that the farmers will not secure cheap fertilizer, and that there will be great dissatisfaction over the rates for power and the method of distribution.

"I see great advantage for the lessee corporation, and I see no hope for the people," the lawmaker said.

PERJURY IN 'FRAME-UP' IS URGED BY SENATOR

Washington, March 20.—A resolution introduced by Senator Walsh of Montana calls on the attorney general to inform the senate if the department of justice intends to prosecute George R. Hyde for perjury, and to also transmit to the senate an itemized statement of all expenditures made or obligations incurred in the prosecution of Senator Wheeler.

Hayes was the government's "surprise witness" in this case. He testified that he arranged with the department of justice at Washington to be at a New York hotel when an appointment would be made to meet a man. That man was Senator Wheeler. Hayes swore he accused the senator before, and did not know he was a senator. The witness further testified that Mr. Wheeler accused with him plans to "make millions" by violating land laws. Mrs. Wheeler made affidavit that her husband was with her and a party of friends during the time Hayes alleged he talked with the senator.

The Hayes' yarn was rejected by a Montana jury, and the perjury is so evident that Senator Walsh asks the senate to call on the department of justice if it intends to prosecute.

Senator Walsh said Senator Wheeler's real offense was his expose of Attorney General Daugherty, who was forced to resign.

In favoring the resolution, Senator Bruce of Maryland said that "the prosecution of Senator Wheeler is one of the most extraordinary episodes in the history of tyrannical criminal procedure."

"To find a parallel in it," he said, "we must go back to the Titus Oakes conspiracy in English history."

Senator Borah, chairman of the senate committee that investigated the case and exonerated the senator, said the prosecution "is a sad and sorry story."

BOSTON WORKERS WIN BIG GARMENT STRIKE

Boston, March 20.—Members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union are jubilant over the successful ending of their two-weeks' strike. Several employers' associations have signed the union agreement, following a seven-hours' conference. During that time more than 1,000 strikers remained in their headquarters for a report. The agreement provides that where the union believes an employer is patronizing non-union shops, he shall show his books. The employers' association agrees that where a member is guilty of non-union practices he shall be fined the difference between the two wage rates for the first offense. For the second offense he shall be expelled.

MINERS' JURY SPLIT

Fort Smith, Ark., March 20.—A federal district jury has failed to agree in the Pennsylvania Coal company's suit for damages against individual miners and their district organization.

At the first trial the company was awarded a judgment of $300,000, but the court of appeals set the decision aside and ordered a new trial on the ground that a conspiracy against interstate commerce was not proven.

The case has been in the courts for several years. It differs from the Coronado case in that the Pennsylvania company does not claim that there was physical interference with the operation of their plants.

BRITISH COAL PLAN INCLUDES STATE AID

London, England, March 20.—After several months' investigation, the royal coal commission has rejected nationalization of mines as commonly understood, but recommends state ownership with private management and lease. The commission opposes a continuance of the present subsidy, which is granted coal owners when the miners threatened a country-wide strike. The state ownership-private operation plan is designed to dispense with royalties and it is believed that this will permit the equalization of high-cost and low-cost mines.

It is estimated that a purchase of mine royalties will cost £100,000,000. The subsidy expires April 30, and there is uneasiness over the prospect of a general strike if miners' wages are reduced. The term "subsidy" is distasteful to the public and the government may continue the system under the name "loan."

That the situation is serious is indicated by Premier Baldwin's unusual course in calling a conference of coal owners and miners to urge them to the importance of giving earnest study to the commission's recommendations.

TOO MANY CARPENTERS ALONG PACIFIC COAST

Los Angeles, March 20.—To counteract a trade union drive by organized carpenters in this section, anti-unionists are advertising that there is a surplus of these workers in southern California.

The Los Angeles county district council of carpenters has issued other plea that these advertisements be ignored.

"There is a surplus of carpenters here," these unionists say. "Our members are not working one-half of the time and wages are deplorably low. There is no wage scale other than a hungry man can demand and the best wages here are from $3 to $6 below those in other large cities.

"A majority of our members are walking the streets and those who are working a week or two in such large numbers that there is a waiting list, as our charitable institutions are overcrowded."

ANOTHER MINE HORROR IN ANTI-UNION FIELD

Eccles, W. Va., March 20.—The recent mine disaster which swept 19 workers to death was in the region of anti-union mine where state laws are ignored and where company thugs threaten employes with physical violence if they suggest trade unionism.

The West Virginia mine bureau reports that since the first of the year 82 lives were lost in the mines of this state. In every instance the fatalities occurred in the anti-union death traps that are operated by mine owners who insist on employing "free and independent" workers.

COULTER IS SECRETARY

Washington, March 20.—C. C. Coulter of this city, recently elected president of the Retail Clerks' International Protective association, has been appointed secretary-treasurer of that organization, to succeed the late Henry J. Conway. Mr. Coulter was elected president last June, and had previously served as vice president. First Vice President John R. Schulte of New Orleans is the new president.

GUATEMALA OUTLAWS STRIKES; MILITARY WILL ENFORCE ACT

Washington, March 20.—Guatemala has enacted a compulsory labor law, in violation of an agreement with other governments of Central America and the United States. Under this act, to cease work collectively is a crime punishable by eight years in prison. If a death occurs during a strike, it is classed as murder and all strikers are equally guilty.

Strikes are placed under control of the military authorities, thus removing industrial disputes from civil courts and placing them in the jurisdiction of courts martial.

Military officials are given a free hand to jail workers by provisions in the law that those guilty of "threats or intimidation" are subject to three years' imprisonment. Under which a laborer who induces a strikebreaker to cease work is liable to two years' imprisonment.

Guatemalan trade unionists have forwarded this information to the Pan-American Federation of Labor.

"This law will subject workers of Guatemala to involuntary servitude against which the world is continually fighting," says Wm. Green, president of the A. F. of L. and also chairman of the Pan-American Federation of Labor. "It is certainly a violation of the agreement with the other Central American governments and the United States to safeguard the inherent right of citizenship of workers. Compulsory labor is a violation of that right."

TARIFF BOARD UNDER FIRE; FOES MAKE SERIOUS CHARGE

Washington, March 20.—Complying with a senate resolution, Vice President Dawes has appointed a non-partisan committee to investigate the Federal Tariff Commission, and to inquire "if any attempt has been made to influence the duties of the members of said commission by any official of the government."

The purpose of the committee is unusual, as it will inquire whether the chief executive dangled diplomatic appointments before any member of the tariff board to induce him to resign; if he asked for an undated resignation from another member, and if he encouraged still another member to refuse to withdraw from a case in which the member's wife was interested.

David Lewis, union miner, former congressman and parcel post authority, was the member who refused to sign his undated resignation before the president reappointed him a member of the board. It is believed that this is the reason for his retirement.

PRESSMEN'S ELECTION WITHOUT FRICTION

Pressmen's Home, Tenn., March 20.—The re-election of President George L. Berry and every associate officer by unanimous vote was the membership of the International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' union of North America, was announced by the union's board of election.

The re-election of President Berry will carry his term of office to August, 1928, when he will have filled this position 21 years.

"The unanimous re-election of my colleagues and myself is most gratifying," said President Berry. "Our organization was never in better shape, financially or numerically. We are free from strikes and lockouts; wage increases are occurring with reasonable regularity; our institutions at Pressmen's Home are responding to the needs of the membership; we are increasing in membership daily; we have not lost in numerical strength in any year for 18 years, and we are settling our differences by conciliation and arbitration. The results of this policy are being accepted by our members and employers in Canada and publishers of North America."

MILITARY COSTS UP; EXCEED OLD GERMANY

Washington, March 20.—In the next fiscal year this country will spend at least $700,000,000 for military and naval purposes, said Senator King, in protesting against excessive appropriations.

"We are at peace with the world," he said, "and there is no situation calling for military preparation. We have an army of approximately 112,000 and yet are making appropriations larger than were made by Germany when that nation was a great military power and had between half a million and a million men in her military service."

GLOVE WORKERS UNITE

St. Louis, Mo., March 20.—Glove workers in this city have organized. This industry is one of the most poorly paid in the country.

CAN'T SETTLE STRIKE ROCKEFELLER WRITES

Cumberland, Md., March 20.—In a letter to Mayor Koon of this city, John D. Rockefeller, jr., declines to interfere in the Western Maryland railroad strike of engineers and firemen.

Mr. Rockefeller was asked by various groups of citizens to use his good offices in the settlement of this dispute, but he replies that "I don't control the situation."

Instead of using his good offices as a mediator, he takes occasion to answer published statements that the Western Maryland is a "Rockefeller line," and that he can "settle the strike."

He says his family owns less than 25 per cent of the stock and that but two members of the board of directors of 12 "can be regarded as in any sense representative of our interests."

He closes his letter with the hope that the five-months' strike "may be but temporary."

LABOR FOES USE BOMB TO DISCREDIT UNIONS

Minneapolis, March 20.—Edward Oliver, manager of the non-union Shubert-Lyric theater, is blessed with occult powers.

For the second time the past few months this wonderful man has miraculously appeared on the scene just in time to grab a dynamite bomb that was intended to wreck his theater.

Three years ago Mr. Oliver had another dynamite scare when two well-known dope fiends were arrested for possessing explosives in his theater. Questioned by the police, one of the accused acknowledged he was employed as a detective by the employers' alliance, and that he induced the other "hophead" to secure the dynamite.

A third time the county attorney made this reference to two officials of the citizens' alliance:

"To my mind it was a dangerous and dastardly act on the part of Briggs and Gleason to incite these two irresponsible men to gain possession of explosives, because there was nothing, or no one, either or both of them, from committing some serious crime."

The Wonderland theater, assisted by the citizens' alliance, has warred on organized labor for several years. Six years ago an injunction prohibited the workers even from mentioning the name of the theater. The unionists ignored the order and four of them were jailed for 90 days each.

ADULTERED COAL USED IN SCHOOLS

Minneapolis, March 20.—A yard foreman for the Flour City Fuel and Transfer company has made affidavit that the company sold adulterated coal to the public school board. The president of the company was quoted to the yard foreman that "I will pay you well for it."

The foreman was then moved out of town "until after the fuss was over with."

He was paid $25 a week and now the company demands that he pay them for the time he was out of the city. One worker who refused to mix genuine coal with splint and screenings, was told to load sand.

LABOR'S PICTURE IS VIEWED BY MANY

Washington, March 20.—More than 50,000 Arkansas people have viewed "Labor's Reward," says H. M. Thackery, secretary-treasurer of the Arkansas State Federation of Labor, in a letter to John J. Manning, secretary-treasurer of the A. F. of L. Union Label Trades department.

The Arkansas trade unionist says the campaign has aroused interest among organized workers, and all other citizens.

WOMEN WAGE EARNERS INCREASE

By WM. GREEN,
Editor American Federationist

With the accumulation of statistical studies, it is evident that the number of women employed in industry is steadily growing and that women are an integral part of the working force, not substitutes or temporary employes.

Nor may women be said to be working merely to add additional spending money. The majority are bona fide bread winners supporting themselves, contributing to the family income or maintaining dependents. The studies of the women's bureau of the United States department of labor shows that 38 per cent of all females over 14 years of age are gainfully employed. In 1920 they constituted one-fifth of the total employed population.

Of the women employed (1920) 4.1 per cent were under 16 years; 16.5 per cent between 16 and 19 years; 21.2 per cent between 20 and 24 years; 46.0 per cent between 25 and 44 years; 18.1 per cent 45 years and over.

The figures showing the distribution of women workers by industries for 1910 and 1920 are: Manufacturing, 1,836,503 and 2,320,845; transportation, 106,625 and 213,054; trade, 468,088 and 667,792; clerical occupations, 593,224 and 1,426,250.

Because of the size and the permanence of this problem there is need for sustained work to inject the principle of organization within these groups of workers. It is not an easy undertaking to organize workers, men or women, unacquainted with the traditions and spirit of group action. The effort to organize women wage earners will require patience, intelligence and vision.

COURTS RESTRICT WORKERS THROUGH LABOR INJUNCTION

St. Louis, Mo., March 20.—In discussing the labor injunction before the St. Louis Bar association, Wm. Green, president of the A. F. of L., said organized labor must be free if it is to serve the workers and society to the fullest extent.

"Organized labor can not succeed if it is merely accorded the right to exist and is restricted in that right by judicial decree," said President Green.

"What would be more meaningless than to accord it the right to exist and then prevent it from functioning through the imposition of legal restraint and the erection of legal barriers?"

The trade unionist emphasized that organized labor seeks immunity from the law. "It for the privilege of functio... in conformity with the law without discrimination and without being made the target of the injunction onslaught," he said. "It objects to the suspension of the rights of its members by the writ of injunction.

"There is no force within our industrial, economic and social life which exercises a more beneficent and stabilizing influence than the organized labor movement. It has always led in the advocacy of high and humane living standards. It has constantly emphasized the value of the human factor in industry.

"It has endeavored to create opportunities for self-development, for cultural and spiritual advancement and educational advantages for the great masses of the people. What purpose could be more commendable? To what other force or power could the workers turn for protection and help if the organized labor movement were destroyed?

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